

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5238
INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 3713

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SOPN, DR
SUBJECT: THE PRD'S APPARENT LOSS OF THE SENATE

REF: (A) SANTO DOMINGO 3711, (B) SANTO DOMINGO 3697
(C) SANTO DOMINGO 3599

1. THE VICTORY OF ANTONIO GUZMAN IN THE MAY 16 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS NOW A FACT ESTABLISHED BY THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD (JCE) (REFTEL A). IT NOW HAS ONLY TO BE PROCLAIMED BY JOINT SESSION OF THE DOMINICAN SENATE AND CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, THUS CLEARING THE WAY

FOR HIS INAUGURATION AUGUST 16 FOR A FOUR-YEAR TERM. THE FORMALITY OF LEGISLATIVE PROCLAMATION IS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE SOMETIME AFTER MID-JULY.

2. THE COUNTRY IS STILL SOMEWHAT STUNNED, HOWEVER, BY THE SUDDEN DENOUEMENT OF THE SEVEN-WEEK WAIT FOR THE FINAL OFFICIAL RESULTS. THE POLITICIANS, THE PRESS AND AVERAGE CITIZENS ARE SCANDALIZED AND ANGRY THAT THE BOARD, TAKING A "PRAGMATIC" APPROACH TO THE DEMANDS FOR

REDRESS BY THE REFORMISTA PARTY OF THE GOVERNMENT, BY FIAT GAVE THE LOSERS THE SENATE. IT REVERSED ITS PROVISIONAL FIGURES OF MAY,
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WHICH GAVE CONTROL OF THE SENATE TO GUZMAN'S PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO DOMINICANO (PRD) 15-12, AND DECIDED LAST NIGHT THAT IT BELONGED TO THE REFORMISTAS BY A 16-11 MARGIN.

3. IT WAS NOT THAT SOME SUCH OUTCOME TO THE PROTRACTED MANEUVERING BY THE REFORMISTAS HAD NOT BEEN FORESEEN. THE PRD AND, ON ITS OWN,

THE PRESS, HAD FOR SOME WHILE BEEN SPECULATING THAT THE BOARD WOULD FIND SOME PRETEXT ON WHICH TO REVERSE PROVISIONAL TALLIES IN SEVERAL CLOSE PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS TO GIVE CONTROL OF THE UPPER CHAMBER TO THE

PR PARTY. THIS SPECULATION CENTERED ON THE BOARD'S PURPOSE IN

TRIGGERING VOTE COUNTS; WOULD IT BE V RELY#A FARR-SAVING, "DOMINICAN"

SOLUTION TO A PAINFUL DILEMMA IN WHICH THE JCE FOUND ITSELF? OR WOULD

IT BE PART OF LOW-RANGE "PLOT" BEING LAID BY RECALCITRANT REFORMISTAS

TO SET THE STAGE FOR A COUP AGAINST GUZMAN AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE? (REFTEL C)

4. BECAUSE THE POPULAR CONSENSUS HAS LONG SINCE ACCEPTED THE MAY 16 ELECTION VICTORY OF GUZMAN AS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION, THE COUNTRY DID NOT APPEAR READY TO ACCEPT A JCE DECISION SWITCHING THE RESULTS IN FOUR SENATE SEATS TO PASS CONTROL TO THE PR; TWO, PERHAPS, BUT FOUR? AND WHAT ABOUT WHO CONTROLS THE LOWER-HOUSE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES? THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION IS NOT CLEAR EVEN NOW FROM A CURSORY READING OF THE BOARD'S "HISTORIC AND TRANSCENDANT" RULING. WHAT IS CLEAR FROM

THE DOCUMENT IS THAT THE BOARD HAD TO REACH A LONG WAY TO FIND THE "PRETEXT" TO COME TO THE DECISION IT DID; THE ARGUMENTATION IS EXTREMELY THIN IN SEVERAL KEY AREAS AND WILL BE DEBATED LONG AFTER THE NEXT CONFIDENTIAL

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CONGRESS IS SEATED.

5. ANOTHER ELEMENT IN THE BOARD'S ACTION WHICH HAS CAUSED SUCH GENERAL SURPRISE AND CONSTERNATION WAS THE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS MADE PUBLIC.

UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO FACE THE PERFERVID PRESS CORPS WHICH HAS MILLED ABOUT JCE HEADQUARTERS FOR WEEKS -- AND WHICH SENSED LAST NIGHT

THAT THE DECISION WAS AT HAND -- THE JCE'S THREE MEMBERS FURTIVELY DEPARTED THE BUILDING BY A REAR EXIT AND LEFT IT TO AN UNFORTUNATE AIDE TO RELEASE THEIR REPORT AT AROUND 10:30 IN THE EVENING. THERE WAS PANDEMONIUM, MANIFEST BY CHAOTIC VIDEO TAPE INTERRUPTIONS OF SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING ON VARIOUS TV STATIONS (EXCEPT FOR THE GOVERNMENT NETWORK WHICH DID NOT, AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, MENTION THE HISTORIC REPORT). PRD DELEGATES WHO HAVE HAUNTED JCE HEADQUARTERS FOR

WEEKS WERE OUTRAGED. "YOU WILL STAND CONDEMNED IN THE JUDGEMENT OF HISTORY," SHOUTED THEIR LEADER. PRESS REPRESENTATIVES, WAY OVER DEADLINE FOR THIS MORNING'S PAPERS, WERE EQUALLY OUTRAGED TO BE HANDED, WITH LITTLE INTERPRETATION FROM THE JCE, AN 89-PAGE LEGAL

DOCUMENT CONTAINING THE RULING.

6. PRD SEC GEN JOSE FRANCISCO PENA GOMEZ WENT ON THE RADIO SOMETIME AFTER MIDNIGHT, WHEN THE ESSENTIAL "THEFT" OF THE SENATE WAS KNOWN, TO

DENOUNCE THE "EXTREMELY GRAVE" SITUATION IN WHICH THE COUNTRY FOUND ITSELF THANKS TO THE JCE'S RULING. BUT PENA ALSO CALLED FOR CALM AND ORDER; LIKE OTHER PRD MEMBERS HE SAW IN THE JUNTA REPORT A CONSPIRACY THAT WOULD PROVOKE THE PRD INTO THE STREETS, GIVING HARD-BITTEN ANTI-DEMOCRATIC FORCES THE CHANCE THEY HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR SINCE THE ELECTORAL RESULTS WERE KNOWN LATE MAY 16.

7. MEETING MORNING OF JULY 8 WITH AN EMBOFF, PENA WAS ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED, BUT HE ACKNOWLEDGED THERE WAS LITTLE THE PARTY REALIST-CONFIDENTIAL

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ICALLY COULD HOPE TO DO TO RIGHT THINGS, SINCE THE BOARD'S DECISION UNDER THE LAW IS UNAPPEALABLE. THE PARTY LEADERSHIP, WHICH MET INTO THE EARLY HOURS THIS MORNING, WAS REGROUPING LATER TODAY TO CONSIDER THE SITUATION. PENA SAID THERE HAD BEEN SOME TALK OF TRYING TO APPEAL

THE RULING TO THE SUPREME COURT BUT HE INDICATED THAT COURSE HELD OUT LITTLE HOPE. EMBOFF MET LATER IN DAY WITH VICE PRES-ELECT JACOBO MAJLUTA WHO FOR THE PAST WEEK ORSO HAS VIEWED THE POSSIBLE LOSS OF THE

SENATE WITH EQUANIMITY; HE HAS TAKEN THE POSITION THAT AS LONG AS THE PRD HAS THE EXECUTIVE POWER IT CAN MANAGE ITS PROGRAMS IN THE LEGISLATURE. THE VP-ELECT ACTUALLY WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS LATEST UPSET IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AS A POTENTIAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO THOSE UNRECONCILED GENERALS WHO, THINKING SOMEHOW THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED SO AS TO PERMIT SOME SORT OF MILITARY INTERVENTION, MIGHT TRY SOMETHING "STUPID" AS THEY DID THE MORNING OF MAY 17.

8. AMBASSADOR ATTENDED PRIVATE DINNER EVENING OF JULY 7 AT WHICH GUZMANS (INCLUDING DAUGHTER SONIA WHO IS PLAYING GROWING ROLE AS HER FATHER'S CONFIDANTE AND ADVISOR) WERE PRESENT. GUZMAN GOT WORD OF JCE

DECISION DURING EVENING AND EXCUSED HIMSELF, TELLING AMBASSADOR HE

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 3713

WAS REQUIRED TO MEET IMMEDIATELY WITH PARTY LEADERS TO DECIDE PRD
REACTION. HIS OWN IMMEDIATE REACTION WAS THAT THE REFORMISTAS WERE
RUBBING IT IN UNCONSCIONABLE -- GRABBING FOUR MORE SENATE SEATS IN-
STEAD OF THE TWO THAT WERE MORE OR LESS EXPECTED. THIS WAS A "PRO-
VOCATION" AND WOULD BE MET WITH CONSIDERABLE POPULAR RESTIVENESS AND
HIS FIRST JOB WAS TO SEE THAT THERE WERE NO OVERREACTION. SONIABE AND

OTHERS PRESENT, SEEMED TO ACCEPT THE INTERPRETATION THAT, WHILE THE
JCE PLOY WAS CHEAP AND DISAGREEABLE AND ADDED TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S

PROBLEMS, THE IMPORTANT THING WAS TO LET THE NEW PRESIDENT AND VICE
PRESIDENT ASSUME OFFICE. WHATEVER MANEUVERING WERE NECESSARY IN IHE
SENATE COULD THEN BE DONE FROM A POSITION OF POWER.

9. THERE MATTERS STAND FOR THE MOMENT. IT APPEARS THAT THE OUTRAGE
FELT BY PRD MILITANTS IS BEING CONTAINED BY THE ESTABLISHED LEADERSHIP.

GIVEN THE NUMBER AND NATURE OF PROVOCATIONS TO WHICH THE WINNING PAR-
TY HAS BEEN SUBJECTED, ITS SELF-CONTROL HAS BEEN QUITE IMPRESSIVE. IT

HAS BEEN FAVORABLY NOTED BY MANY LEADING DOMINICANS, WHO SEEM TO COUNT

NOW ON THE PRD TO MAINTAIN THE ELECTORAL PEACE UNTIL INAUGURATION DAY
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AUGUST 16 AND BEYOND. THE GOVERNMENT AND THE REFORMISTA PARTY, ON THE

OTHER HAND, HAVE BEEN WIDELY JUDGED TO HAVE BEHAVED IRRESPONSIBLY
THROUGHOUT THE "CRISIS". INDIGNANT EDITORIALS WONDER BOLDLY IF PRES-
IDENT BALAGUER, A PERSONALITY IN WHICH RANCORS RUN DEEP, IS TAKING VEN-

GEANCE ON HIS PEOPLE, WHO REJECTED HIM AT THE PINNACLE OF HIS CAREER.
IN ANY CASE HE CONTINUES SECLUDED AND MUTE IN HIS HOUSE OR, OCCASION-
ALLY, AT THE PALACE.

10. THE USG SHOULD CONSIDER ITS POSTURE IN THE PRESENT CONFUSED SITUATION HERE. WE ASSUME BY MONDAY'S NOON BRIEFING BY THE DEPARTMENT

SPOKESMAN, THE FACT THAT GUZMAN'S VICTORY IS NOW OFFICIAL WILL BE NON-

NEWS IN THE U.S. NONETHELESS, WE FEEL STRONGLY HE NEEDS OUR SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT AS HE IS ALLOWED FINALLY TO BEGIN ORGANIZING HIS GOVERNMENT.

11. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT THE SPOKESMAN VOLUNTEER RPT VOLUNTEER FOL-

LOWING STATEMENT AT NOON BRIEFING MONDAY, JULY 10: "WE WERE PLEASED TO LEARN OVER THE WEEKEND THAT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, CONFIRMING THE MAY 16 ELECTION OF ANTONIO GUZMAN FERNANDEZ AS THE COUNTRY'S NEXT PRESIDENT, WAS SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED AND THAT HE WILL TAKE OFFICE AUGUST 16. AS THAT COUNTRY'S FIRST PEACEFUL TRANSFER OF POWER IN THIS CENTURY FROM ONE CONSTITUTION-

AL GOVERNMENT TO ANOTHER, AS A RESULT OF A FREE AND OPEN ELECTION, THIS IS A MILESTONE IN THE STRENGTHENING OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN

THIS HEMISPHERE. WE LOOK FORWARD TO CLOSE COOPERATION WITH MR. GUZMAN'S ADMINISTRATION."
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12. FOLLOWING ARE PROPOSED REPLIES TO QUESTIONS IF ASKED:

Q. WEREN'T THERE CHARGES OF THE GOVERNMENT "STEALING" CONTROL OF THE SENATE, WHICH MR. GUZMAN'S PARTY ACTUALLY WON -- HOW DO YOU CALL THAT FREE AND OPEN ELECTIONS?

A. WE ARE AWARE THAT THE FINAL RULING OF THE DOMINICAN ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES RELATING TO THE RESULTS IN SEVERAL PROVINCES WAS CONTROVERSIAL. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO DISCUSS THE RULING ON THE RESULTS IN THE PARTICULAR PROVINCES BUT MR. GUZMAN'S ELECTION AS PRESIDENT HAS NOW BEEN OFFICIALLY CERTIFIED UNDER DOMINICAN ELECTORAL LAW, AND HE WILL TAKE OFFICE IN AUGUST.

Q. WHO IS REPRESENTING US AT THE INAUGURATION?

A. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT HAS BEEN DECIDED YET, BUT YOU CAN BE SURE THE MAKEUP OF OUR DELEGATION WILL DO HONOR TO THE OCCASION.
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Message Attributes

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